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ABSTRACT

During one term at a laboratory school, reading was systematically deleted from activites in one secondary level class and replaced with film, lecture, oral reading, slides, and other audiovisual aids. The Nelson-Denny Reading Test served as pretest-posttest for the twelve-week experiment, with 19 of 25 students completing both tests. The results were confusing, since higher vocabulary scores did not always signal progress in grade level, and since not all comprehension scores were high enough to compute their grade equivalents. Some of the inferences made from the data include the following: the "literature without reading" class did not affect students' vocabulary skills significantly; comprehension skills were enhanced when printed (reading) material was used for instruction; some learning styles appear to be oriented toward audiovisual rather than reading materials; students who are used to learning from the printed page may not be prepared to transfer to other formats; the six students with insufficient skills for converting their reading scores to grade equivalents made significant gains in overall reading, suggesting that their past experiences may have increased thier adaptability to new contexts; many students did not take learning in the nonreading mode seriously; and the questionable quality of much commercial television may have tainted teachers' judgments about the efficacy of audiovisual learning. (The daily outline for the course is included.) (RL)

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LITERATURE WITHOUT READING

A Paper

Presented at the Annual Conference on English Education and Secondary School English
(1st, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 15-18, 1979)

by

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LITERATURE WITHOUT READING

Language Arts is often defined as containing reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Most curricula spend the majority of instruction time on reading and writing. That listening and speaking are neglected is ordinarily conceded. Writing, being time consuming, often slips. Reading, however, is stressed as a major part of the content of literature even in the high school. This specific emphasis on reading led me to experiment with eliminating reading from at least one English class. The study began with a prejudiced point of view. My premise was to systematically delete reading (taking in knowledge from the printed page) from my class and to pretest and posttest the results.

Reading people will argue that this is not deleting reading. Language Arts is such an integrated discipline that the areas are intertwined despite efforts to isolate them. If this is true, then why do we have reading classes?

Burris Laboratory School, a department of Teachers College at Ball State University, is a public school corporation limited to 750 scholastics serving a K-12 population with geographical boundaries of the state of Indiana. A class of twenty-five students varying from ninth to twelfth grade balanced between the sexes and containing students of varying abilities and types including at least two minority races and two non-native English speakers, was begun during the winter term of 1978-1979. The eighty-minute class met five days a week for a period of twelve weeks.

The experiment was of simple design. Reading (taking in information and/or ideas from the printed page) was systematically deleted from the class. Film, lecture, oral reading, slides, and other audio-visual media were substituted. The Nelson-Denny Reading Test was chosen; pretest was form D; and posttest was form C. Since the class lasted only twelve weeks the possibility of significant

change was remote. The experiment was intended (1) to give indications, (2) to set a format for further study, and (3) to develop a working set of lessons from which others could replicate and gain more data.

The pretest was given on the first day of class. This resulted in a loss of some data since registrations entered the class for four additional days. Vocabulary subtests ranged from 6.8 to over the 15+ extrapolation. Comprehension scores varied from below the scale (3) to over the 15+ extrapolation. Total pretest scores also showed a wide range from 6.3 grade equivalent to 13.1.

Since one of the limitations of the content involved available audio-visual resources of an inexpensive nature, the content of the class was developed along lines of genre. Units of short story, poetry, and drama were planned. Originally the novel Anna Karenina was planned to be a part of the sequence, but obtaining the rights to archive the video-tape of the ten portions proved fruitless. The television production was shown over a ten-week period in my area and this did not coincide with any term so that an educational use of the material was dependent on holding the tapes until the next term. This did not abide with present copyright laws and permission from the network proved to be a circling string of letters.

My first unit centered around structural analysis. Students viewed films that were interesting to them as stories, but were requested to analyze the film according to specific points. My second thrust was short story form. The analysis of structure was broadened to describe a specific genre rather than just bits of analysis. From this the class moved into discussion of author's craft. We brain-stormed in small discussion groups to discover how many types

of analysis would be possible about a specific film.

Throughout the time students were doing simple listening exercises in class. They were asked to practice discussion and speaking skills and they were asked to write short items in class and one essay outside of class each week of approximately 500 words. Students who were unfamiliar with essay form or who felt unable to accomplish this task, were given the alternate task of writing one paragraph each day outside of class.

WEEK ONE

Monday Pretest
Outline the objectives and requirements of the class

Tuesday Dr. Heidigger's Experiment (2 films; one the story, one the discussion)
General discussion of the film story
Introduction of the word synopsis
Work for consensus for the synopsis of this story
General discussion of the second film
Simple character analysis (Divide the class into small groups. Each group takes one of the characters and finds the position of that character in the story.)
One representative of each group reports to the whole class.

Wednesday Occurance at Owl Creek Bridge
General discussion of the author's use of drama (how much is inherent in the written story and how much is created by the film.)
Object of the day is to have everyone in the class to contribute to the discussion in some way.

Thursday Bartleby (2 films; one the story, one the discussion)
After both films are shown, continue to reinforce the analysis.
Call for a synopsis
Discuss the characters
Continue to build on the drama analysis begun yesterday.
Goal is to find that the analysis of the film enhances understanding and enjoyment of the art form.

Friday Building Better Sentences
Each person goes to the chalkboard today.
Use Strong's sentence combining techniques.
Dictate sentences and have students combine them into one sentence.
Overhead transparencies are also good, but they do require reading.
First essay due today.

WEEK TWO

Monday I Like Trees
Write ten sentences about the film.
Divide into small groups; combine sentences into a statement that includes analysis of the film.
Introduce the word thesis. What is the thesis of this film?

What is the form of the development of this film?
Does this film achieve its goal?
On what level is this film truly interesting? (primary or elementary)
Why was it shown to you? Because the thesis and development were blatant
Recall: What was the thesis and development of each of the films for last week?

Tuesday Daffodils
Write ten sentences about this film.
Divide into small groups; combine sentences into a statement that includes analysis of the film including thesis and development notions.
General discussion of the thesis (Some students will make a case for more than one theme in this film.)

Wednesday Agnes De Mille's Lizzie Borden Ballet
Write ten sentences about the film.
Develop your own statement concerning the thesis and development of this film. (Students may work in pairs or threes or alone.)
After this, then discuss the varying theses that are presented.
Note that this film does challenge the high school student. In some cases students will be frustrated initially.

Thursday Grand Canyon Joseph Wood Krutch
General discussion of the thesis and development of this film
(I have a written text of the film to help with the discussion.)
The film follows a spacial development starting with the rim of the canyon and going to the bottom. Students often get caught up in the smaller developmental structures as they discuss. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss outlines and their meaning. I had my students develop outlines for the subtopics of the film on the chalkboard; then they were put together in proper order and magnitude.

Friday Three essays from last Friday were copied on the chalkboard.
Students are asked to analyze the thesis and development of each.
Essays were picked which demonstrated basically good form and continuity, but contained one major flaw (a sequencing problem; messy and with many spelling errors, but with excellent thesis and development; one stated thesis and a development that cried out for another thesis.) I maintain a file of suitable essays in case one that is proper is not submitted the prior week, but I find that my students like it better if I use their work. I do not degrade them or embarress them (in fact they are anonymous), but they are aware that these are essays that are typical of their class.
The three essays are picked and discussed. Students are encouraged to give constructive critical comments (both plus and minus). If I have difficulty in getting plus comments, I require that for each minus cited, a plus must be found.

WEEK THREE

Monday This week was the last week before Christmas.
Doll's House Pt. I
General discussion of the film thus far.

Tuesday Doll's House Pt. II
General discussion of the film and story
Discussion of the Doll's House film
General discussion of the commentary
Women's liberation implications should be brought out if they don't come up in class discussion
other elements in the discussion map should include cultural implications of the Christmas season and family life

Wednesday O'Henry's Full House
The Clarion Call
Discussion of the film
Analysis of the short story form, the characters, thesis etc.
The Cop and The Anthem
Comparison/contrast discussion
If necessary have the students prepare lists of likes and differences in order to be ready for discussion

Thursday The Last Leaf
Discussion of the story
(Be sure to relate each story with the entire film sequence.)
The Ransom of Red Chief
Discussion of the story
Practice in story analysis i.e. discuss how this story would be updated to reflect today's atmosphere.

Friday The Gift of the Magi
Discussion of the five stories and their taste of O'Henry as a writer.
Since this was the last day of school before Christmas vacation the remainder of the period was used in recitation.
Twas the Night Before Christmas
How Come Christmas
Other appropriate holiday fare (I have a notebook that I select from each year.)

WEEK FOUR

Monday This day was the beginning of the term after Christmas. It was necessary to redefine the perimeters of the class and to recall past experiences.
The American Short Story - an introductory film to a series
Students were encouraged to recap the discussions of past films and to review in general the data collected thus far.

Tuesday Parker Adderson
General discussion

Wednesday The Jolly Corner
General Discussion

Thursday The Blue Hotel
General Discussion

Friday I'm a Fool
General Discussion

WEEK FIVE
Monday Soldier's Home
General Discussion
Tuesday Bernice Bobs Her Hair
General Discussion
Wednesday Almos' A Man
General Discussion
Thursday The Displaced Person
General Discussion
Friday The Music School
General Discussion

These past ten days have been intended to be used as practice in discussion skills. I generally outline ten discussion goals that I expect of my students. I ask them to evaluate where they are within these goals and to participate and practice their discussion skills. At the same thime their discussion skills are getting practice, I expect the students to use the content of the stories and the analysis procedures previously introduced as fodder for those discussions. Most often I divide the group into manageable sized groups (5-8). In some cases the groups are larger (10), and in some cases the groups are threes. I try to vary the individuals in each group. I also try to emphasize that the level of learning is two-fold (1) the process of discussion and its skills and (2) the content and form of literature - specific knowledge of the discipline of literature.

WEEK SIX
Monday Short Story Carousel Pt. I
This carousel takes a different format and uses some different terminology. I use this as a second teaching tool for knowledge. The students like the lively format of the multimedia kit.
Tuesday Short Story Carousel Pt. II
Wednesday My Old Man (two films)
Discussion if time
Thursday Lady or the Tiger
This film is introduced to show the form of the short story. The students are interested in form now and show a remarkable insight into the more complex forms that have been previously viewed.
Simulation: Students are asked to put themselves in the place of the character who must choose the correct door. Students are asked to choose the left or right door on a piece of paper with their name. Students are then told that behind one door is an A for this week's grade and behind the other door is an F. Students are then asked to make a judgement. The teacher collects the papers, tallies the rights and lefts and tells the students how many are getting A and how many are getting F. Students are then handed back the papers and are given the opportunity to change their minds or to keep the same door. Papers are again collected and the tally made. Students are told how many are getting A and F again. I kept the students in suspense until the next day. Then I told them which door was which choice. This simulation made the Lady or the Tiger more real and at the same time provided a different experience for the class. Discussion among the class members followed on an informal basis. I did not have to initiate a thing.

Friday Discussion of a school issue
Students were asked to work in committees and to discuss the pros and cons of developing a lending library in our school. Students were asked to draw up a set of pro and con arguments. Then the committee was asked to develop a position paper stating the consensus of the committee. (Some groups filed a majority position and a minority position.)

WEEK SEVEN

Monday Lecture with overhead projections introducing concrete poetry as an art form. Students are asked to look at several different types of poetry and then are asked to work with one type.
Students are given several ideas concerning the word play. The letters are used to illustrate several combinations of word/picture communication. (These transparencies are available in a Briefcase from Burris Laboratory School, Ball State University.)
Each student is asked to think of a word and have the letters in the word graphically illustrate the action of the word.
Examples are posted as the students finish.
Some students ponder over one example and others sketch several in rough form. Some students seems to enjoy working alone while others tend to need reinforcement and encouragement from peers. I try to remain flexible in this endeavor and adapt the room atmosphere toward the most productive path for this particular group.

Tuesday This day is an extension of day one. T e second day mention is made of space, placement, size, and shape of letters to form words and ideas. Again the students are asked to explore their own thoughts in this medium.
Each student is asked to come up with at least one example.
This lesson is enhanced by additional transparencies with examples.

Wednesday On the third day of concrete poetry exploration, students are exposed to the idea of "permutation." Students are introduced to several examples of "rolling" poetry. The various forms are explored and then for a third day the students are asked to produce an example of concrete expression.

Thursday Today the concept the the GRID POEM is introduced. I usually work with one poem on the chalkboard. The one chosen for the experimental class was tied to the school sports program since it coincided with a particularly exciting basketball season. It is important to choose a word with vowels and consonants that are frequently used in the language in order to make a grid poem. A second technique I use is to have the students make as many words as possible from the grid word before trying to think of putting the ideas together.
Students like to work on these poems. Often the working is the most satisfying part of this endeavor however. The completed poem is difficult for the unitiated to decipher without lengthy explanation.
Students seem to prefer to work in groups for this activity. They also worked side-by-side, but alone using the group for ideas and encouragement, but intent on producing a grid alone.

Friday This day was used as a free day. The students reviewed the transparencies. I had a number of concrete poetry books available in the classroom. Students appraised each others efforts of the week. It was in general

an evaluation of an art form too. Students had grown to appreciate the intellectual gymnastics of the form. Some students were still very skeptical that this was anything more than a gimmick. A few students spent this day going to the library and searched out some other concrete poetry examples. Students concluded in general that there were a lot of opportunists in the field; and that some of the "poets" were just trying to get attention.
I was pleased with their analysis of the week. My students found that they could critique an art form and justify their conclusions using analysis tools and communicated to the class through practiced discussion forms.

WEEK EIGHT

Monday Poetry of Rock Pt. I
Students were interested and entertained. They enjoyed this change of pace and the opportunity to just take in information after a week of producing material.

Tuesday Poetry of Rock Pt. II
After the two carousels were completed the students announced that those were all right, but that they did not reflect today's music and today's poetry.
It was time to announce the project to be completed during the last week of class. Each student was asked to produce a multi-media presentation to the class using music, poetry, and visuals. The students were to try to express the ideas using the most impact possible.
Our media coordinator, Phil Stiers, told the students about the hours that the media center would be open and offered his expert help in producing the various slide shows, the tapes, and coordinating the whole production. (Term projects were due Monday - Thursday of Week Twelve giving students a minimum of three and one-half weeks.)

Wednesday Listening Beyond Words
General discussion
A few listening games (I have a whole notebook full of listening games and I chose a few for each day.)

Thursday Listening Skills (a film)
General discussion
More listening games

Friday Listening Games
I spent this day working on listening skills using a game format.
Some of these students have been doing these activities before as I use these as filler activities in the last five minutes before class changes.
Today I had time to play several games and to help students to clarify specific problems when listening. I used this day also to evaluate the concepts presented in the films used on Wednesday and Thursday.

WEEK NINE

Monday A Pair of Blue Jeans
Today we began a review of thesis and development.
Students were asked to prepare their ideas of thesis and development and

to confer with others to defend their points of view. Some students commented that the listening skills development had helped them to be more aware of these elements.

Tuesday The Cave
Again the students were asked to prepare thesis and development statements for this film and to exchange ideas in discussion format.

Wednesday Characters in Conflict
Students were asked to write at least ten facts learned about characters from the text of this film.
Students then collaborated to develop an outline of the film.

Thursday The Secret Sharer (two films)
Students were asked to apply the material from Wednesday's film about characters to the film of the Secret Sharer.
General discussion
Several students used this opportunity to develop an essay from this discussion.

Friday Sentence Combining exercises (Strong)
I used the chalkboard to produce examples of combining and to explore possible diversity in combining.

WEEK TEN

Monday The whole day was consumed in viewing part of the Animal Farm

Tuesday The Animal Farm completed.
General discussion of the film.
Students were encouraged to analyze, to question, to use the knowledge gained from past experience in the class. Each time a discussion stopped in one of the groups, students were asked to use the concepts and techniques introduced in class to stimulate further discussion and eventually further probing.

Wednesday Grammar Carousel I
This carousel combines a slide show with exercises for the class. It is an excellent canned presentation and review of grammar.

Thursday Grammar Carousel II

Friday Grammar Carousel III

WEEK ELEVEN

Monday Our Town Pt. I

Tuesday Our Town Pt. II

Wednesday Our Town Discussion film
General discussion

Thursday The Hunt
General Discussion
I used this discussion to determine if the techniques presented in this class had been internalized by the students. In general I was pleased with this class.

Friday Sentence Combining exercises (Strong)
Extensive use of the chalkboard

WEEK TWELVE
Monday Seven term project presentations
Tuesday Six term project presentations
Wednesday Six term project presentations
Thursday Six term project presentations
The biggest drawback to this activity was the amount of time necessary to set up each presentation. It took the same amount of time to set up each project as it did to show it.
Students learned a great deal from the project, and the class seemed pleased with the products.
Friday Posttest
Evaluation of the class

Of the twenty-five pupils in the class nineteen were present on both the pretest day and the posttest day. The results are tabulated in Table One. The results are confusing. Ten subjects added numbers of correct answers to their vocabulary, but this did not always signal progress in grade level. Nine subjects had fewer correct vocabulary answers, but only eight had lower grade equivalent. Comprehension scores are most unreliable since six of the nineteen students did not score high enough to compute a grade equivalent on either the pretest or the posttest. My table reflects therefore the differences between raw scores. These results can be deceptive.

Inferences from this data are:

1. Half of the students made gains in vocabulary and half of the students lost in vocabulary. The Literature Without Reading Class did not affect the students vocabulary skills significantly.

2. Although twenty-five percent of the students gained in comprehension skills, fifty percent of the students lost in comprehension skills. The skills of comprehension are enhanced and supported by use of the printed page for instruction.

3. Students who gained in vocabulary and comprehension gained more than was

Pupil	Pretest Vocabulary raw	grade	Pretest Comprehension raw	grade	Posttest Vocabulary raw	grade	Posttest Comprehension raw	grade	Vocab.+	Vocab.-	Comp.+	Comp.-
1	19	10.7	20	13.1	8	8.5	15	12.1		11		7
2	18	10.4	17	11.2	28	8.5	10	10.7	10			7
3	10	7.8	15	9.9	18	6.9	6	8.9	8			9
4	23	11.9	8	6.3	17	9.3	13	8.7		6		5
5	10	7.8	1	---	14	---	10	---	4		9	
6	10	7.8	2	---	15	---	10	---	5		8	
7	11	9.0	3	---	10	---	8	---		4	5	
8	6	7.1	9	6.6	8	7.3	12	6.0	2		3	
9	13	8.7	14	9.2	7	---	7	9.0		6		7
10	13	8.7	3	---	0	---	3	---		13	0	0
11	6	7.1	6	---	8	---	7	---	2		1	
12	4	6.8	8	6.3	2	---	7	---		2		1
13	5	7.0	14	9.2	11	6.4	8	7.7	6			4
14	15	9.3	11	7.5	10	6.2	6	8.3		5		5
15	15	9.3	11	7.5	0	---	15	8.3		15	4	
16	14	9.0	12	8.1	8	6.9	11	8.5		6		1
17	9	7.6	3	---	13	---	2	---	4			1
18	49	15+	30	15+	52	15+	25	15+	3			5
19	12	8.3	12	8.1	24	8.5	7	8.1	12			5

lost by students who lost in those test scores. Perhaps there are some learning styles that are supported better using other than printed matter.

4. Of the six students tested who did not have sufficient skills to convert their reading scores to grade equivalents, five made significant gains in overall reading. Comprehension skills were gained, but only five made gains in vocabulary.

5. Both non-native English speakers in the class made gains on both parts of the test.

6. Perhaps students who are used to taking in information from the printed page and being tested in the same frame of reference are not as well prepared to transfer their knowledge to other formats.

7. The six students with poor reading skills may be better able to adapt to new contexts because of their past experiences.

8. Many students did not take learning as seriously when it was presented in the audio-visual medium.

9. Perhaps our disparagement of television for its ills has tainted our judgements concerning audio-visual learning.

10. Emphasis on reading specifically in the teaching of English is important.

A Conclusion

There is a need for more teaching using audio-visual materials not as just supportive material and frills, but as the very core of instruction. Students can learn in this way, and much or our adult knowledge is transmitted in this fashion.